

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LISBON

UNCLAS STATE 080559

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PO

SUBJECT:PRESS BRIEFING AND GUIDANCE: PORTUGAL

BELOW ARE PERTINENT Q'S AND A'S NOON PRESS BRIEFING
APRIL 9 CONCERNING PORTUGUESE PRIME MINISTER'S COMMENTS
ABOUT USE OF AZORES BASE.

ALSO INCLUDED IS GUIDANCE PREPARED BUT NOT USED AT THE
BRIEFING ON PRIME MINISTER'S REMARKS ABOUT AN ECONOMIC
BOYCOTT OF PORTUGAL.

-- PRESS BRIEFING

QUOTE: Q: THE PORTUGUESE PRIME MINISTER IS QUOTED
TODAY AS SAYING AT A PRESS CONFERENCE YESTERDAY THAT
THERE WOULD BE NO QUESTION OF THE USE OF THE BASES
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IN THE AZORES AGAINST THE ARABS. HAS THIS COUNTRY

BEEN INFORMED OF ANY PORTUGUESE INTENTION TO DENY
PERMISSION FOR THE U.S. PLANES TO REFUEL THERE?

A: NO. WE HAVE NOT BEEN INFORMED BEFORE OR AFTER THE
PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT; AND I MIGHT MAKE JUST ONE
ADDITIONAL COMMENT THERE WITH REGARD TO OUR NEGOTIATIONS
ON THE AZORES BASE: THAT THIS SUBJECT HAS NEVER ARISEN

IN THE DISCUSSIONS THAT WE'VE HAD THUS FAR. IN THAT
CONNECTION, THE LAST TIME THAT AMBASSADOR MCCLOSKEY MET
WITH AMBASSADOR THEMIDO WAS IN JANUARY; AND AT THAT
TIME THE PORTUGUESE INFORMED US THAT THEY WOULD PREFER
TO WAIT UNTIL AFTER THEIR ELECTIONS BEFORE RESUMING THE
DISCUSSIONS.

AND THAT'S ABOUT ALL I CAN GIVE YOU AT THIS TIME.

Q: WELL, HIS STATEMENT IS PRETTY CLEAR. ARE YOU
ACCEPTING IT, HOWEVER, AS NOT AUTHORITATIVE?

A: NO. HE GAVE IT IN A PRESS CONFERENCE. I'M JUST
SAYING THAT -- I WAS ASKED IF WE HAD BEEN NOTIFIED
BEFOREHAND. MY ANSWER WAS: NO, WE HAVEN'T HEARD ANYTHING,
ANY CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT SINCE
THE PRIME MINISTER'S PRESS CONFERENCE AND THIS HAS NOT
BEEN A SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION THUS FAR IN OUR BASE
NEGOTIATIONS.

Q: WE NOW UNDERSTAND THE BASE AT LAJES IS NOT TO BE
AVAILABLE TO US IN CASE OF AN AIRLIFT TO ISRAEL?

A: WELL, WE HAVE NOTED THE PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENT,
YES --.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY REACTION TO IT?

A: NO. I DON'T HAVE ANY PARTICULAR REACTION TO IT AT
THIS TIME.

Q: YOU SAY THERE WAS NO NOTIFICATION EARLIER. SURELY,
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THE STATE DEPARTMENT WAS AWARE THAT PORTUGUESE OFFICIALS
HAD BEEN SAYING THAT THIS WAS GOING TO HAPPEN. ARE YOU
SAYING THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS NOT RECEIVED ANY
INFORMATION?

A: I HAVE SEEN A NUMBER OF PRESS REPORTS TO THIS EFFECT.
WHAT I'M TELLING YOU IS THAT THIS SUBJECT HAS NEVER
COME UP IN ANY DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN US AND THE PORTUGUESE

AUTHORITIES. THAT'S ALL I CAN SAY.

Q: YOU ARE SAYING THAT YOU HAVE NO REACTION. WHY DON'T YOU?

A: WE WILL PRESUMABLY BE DISCUSSING THIS SUBJECT WHEN THE NEGOTIATIONS RESUME.

Q: SO AFTER THE ELECTIONS?

A: I JUST PREFER AT THIS TIME NOT TO HAVE ANY FURTHER COMMENT ON IT. UNQUOTE

-- GUIDANCE

Q: HAS THE UNITED STATES CONSIDERED AN ECONOMIC BOYCOTT AGAINST PORTUGAL OR ATTEMPTED TO DISCOURAGE U.S. COMPANIES FROM INVESTING OR OPERATING IN PORTUGAL?

A: AS YOU KNOW, THE UNITED STATES' ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO PORTUGAL TOTALS \$15 MILLION THIS YEAR, PLUS A HOUSING INVESTMENT GUARANTEE OF \$20 MILLION. THIS FACT IS TESTIMONY TO OUR CONTINUING INTEREST IN THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF PORTUGAL. WE HAVE TAKEN ABSOLUTELY NO ACTION WHICH WOULD DISCOURAGE U.S. COMPANIES FROM INVESTING OR OPERATING IN PORTUGAL BUT, OBVIOUSLY, THESE ARE DECISIONS THAT WOULD BE TAKEN BY THE PRIVATE COMPANIES THEMSELVES, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE ATMOSPHERE AFFECTING THEIR OPERATIONS AND RETURNS. KISSINGER

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